

Stars wish soldiers happy holidays

By Staff Sgt. A.C. Eggman

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Detachment 1

BALAD AIR BASE — Airmen and soldiers crowded the only hangar here Dec. 17 in hopes of capturing a glimpse of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and several entertainers who were traveling throughout Iraq.

Gen. Richard Myers brought with him Academy Award winning actor and comedian Robin Williams, Olympic gold medalist and professional wrestler Kurt Angle, NASCAR driver Mike Wallace, and former model and television personality Leeann Tweeden.

“We’re here for one reason,” Myers said. “We’re here to wish you happy holidays.”

Myers is taking the United Service Organizations-sponsored entertainers throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

The general wasted no time in thanking the troops for their part in capturing Saddam Hussein. He said the capture will have symbolic and substantial effects on Iraq and throughout the world.

“Through your efforts over here, you have given hope to 25 million folks in this land,” Myers said. “You have given them real hope — hope for freedom, for prosperity. Nobody has been able to give them that for decades. That’s going to make a difference not only (in Iraq) but in the region, perhaps the world. This is your moment in history, and you’ve taken advantage of it and you have performed superbly.”

The general also warned the eager crowd that there were still challenges to be faced.

“I know where it all starts,” Myers said. “Anytime you undertake any combat operations or humanitarian operations or any time of crisis response, it all starts with the support you provide. You are the backbone of being able to do things further in the field.”

The success of any mission is based on the support from



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Lisa Zunzanyika

Festive audience member Senior Airman Michael Ceser waits Dec. 16 for the arrival of a United Service Organizations-sponsored show.



Airman 1st Class Janet Cutler speaks briefly with Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on Dec. 17. Myers brought a United Service Organizations tour here to entertain airmen and soldiers. Cutler is assigned to Detachment 1, Expeditionary Medical Squadron and deployed from Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

behind the lines and how well those servicemembers perform, he told the audience.

“We thank you for what you do, day-in and day-out, supporting those out there,” he said. “We thank you for all the support that comes out of this great base.”

After a late arrival, the general quickly introduced Tweeden, whose father was in the Air Force.

“Growing up in a household like that, I really learned what it meant to be an American, to be a patriot,” she said. It was Tweeden’s fifth USO tour and her first to a forward-deployed location.

“We realize the freedoms we have in the greatest country in the world,” she said. “When you get older, you realize how blessed we are with what we have. If it wasn’t for all you (people) serving in uniform and those who served before you, we wouldn’t live in the (great) land that we do.”

Tweeden told the audience she knew morale was important and that it is difficult to be away from friends and family during the holidays, but she wanted to assure the troops their efforts were not forgotten and were appreciated.

“The least I could do is come here and say ‘thank you’ and tell you the folks back home, no matter what you hear on the news, ... really do support you,” she said. “And we want you to come home. The sooner, the better.”

Following Tweeden, Angle and Wallace also paid tribute to the men and women in uniform before the lead performer took stage.

“Gooooood afternoon, Balad!” screamed Williams, playing on words from his 1987 hit movie, “Good Morning, Vietnam.” Williams took the stage and delivered a barrage of comedy, including spoofs about Hussein, Osama Bin Laden and nonalcoholic beverages.

The group of entertainers also threw hats and T-shirts into the crowd during Williams’ performance. Capping off a nearly 50-minute performance, Williams invited the crowd on stage to take group photographs and receive autographs before leaving for another stop in the tour.

The chairman said he expects the group will meet and

talk with up to 30,000 American servicemembers during its visit to the region.

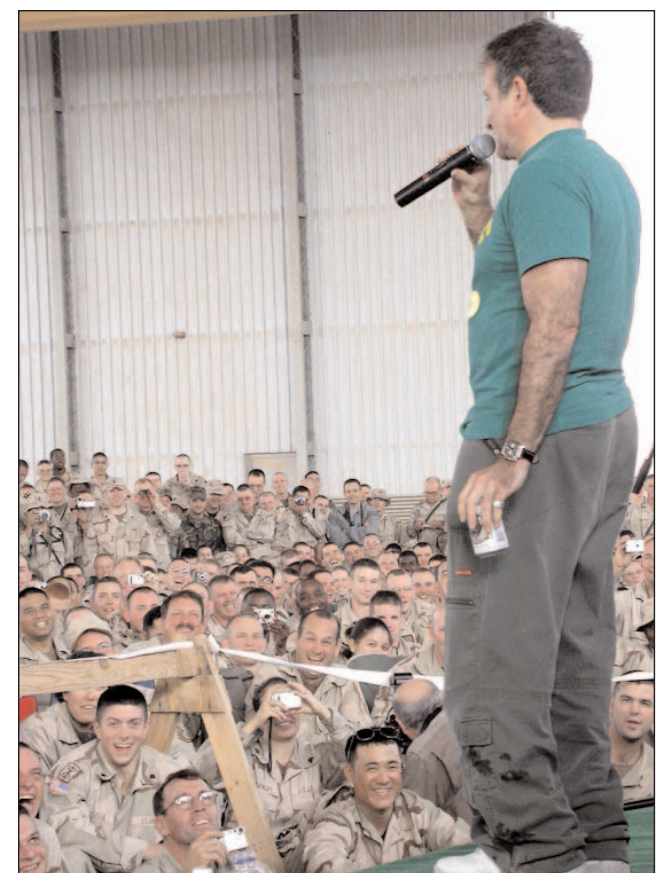


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams

Academy Award-winning actor and comedian Robin Williams is surrounded by military admirers following a holiday-tour stop here Dec. 17. Williams and other celebrities are visiting military forces, along with Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as part of a United Service Organizations-sponsored tour.

Kirkuk Air Base Chapel Schedule

Friday
5 a.m., 7 p.m. – Islamic prayer
9 a.m. – Catholic Mass (Sky Soldier chapel)

Saturday
7 p.m. – Catholic Mass

Sunday
8 a.m. – Gospel Service
9 a.m. – Catholic Mass (Sky Soldier chapel)
10 a.m. – General Protestant
11:30 a.m. – Catholic Mass
1 p.m. – Latter-Day Saints
2 p.m. – Catholic Mass (Sky Soldiers Chapel)
7 p.m. – Protestant Service

Tuesday
6:30 p.m. – Growing as a Christian: Studying the Book of James

Wednesday
8 a.m. – The Bible in Light of Current History and Local Events
5:30 p.m. – Building Your Faith: Studying the Book of Hebrews

*All services are held at the Ten Days From Tomorrow Chapel unless otherwise noted. Times subject to change. Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and other denominations should contact chapel administration for updates on their religious requirements and support.

Santa says, “Merry Christmas!”



Photo by Spc. Briana G. Wright/319th MPAD

An Iraqi boy receives a gift from Santa at the Christmas party hosted by the 18th Military Police Brigade last week at the Iraqi Convention Center. More than 150 children from both the Mother Therese Orphanage and surrounding neighborhood attended.

CHRISTMAS

Continued from Page 8

the ones who usually need the gifts, not because they can't get what's in the gift elsewhere, but because they're usually the ones who need to be handed a gift, to let them know they've always got someone looking out for them. We want to make their heart increase three sizes."

Meanwhile at the palace on Division Main, the 101st's G-6 office is buzzing with holiday fanatics. The self-proclaimed "best decorated office in the palace" received its Christmas makeover on the previous holiday – Thanksgiving. Chief Warrant Officer Carrie McLeish, automation technician for the 101st's G-6 office at the palace on Division Main, contacted her mother and asked if she could send holiday decorations for the office. At the same time, Maj. Tim Solie asked his wife, Diana, if she could do the same.

The decorations were sent, lots of them. The holiday season has been strange for McLeish. While the holiday season has elevated her longing to be home with her two sons, irony has twisted itself in a knot

and kept half the family together. Her husband, Paul, a staff sergeant in the Army, deployed at the same time as her and now works with her at the palace.

"It's pretty funny," McLeish said. "It was nice to be able to decorate the Christmas tree with him out here."

Spc. Christian Hanna, an infantryman with 3rd Battalion, 187th, will spend Christmas on an isolated mountaintop in the Badush region of northern Iraq, on a mission to destroy unexploded ordnance in the area. But his spirits are high, chiefly, he said, due to the division's forthcoming redeployment in February and March.

Back in Mosul, Mauney's six-foot Christmas tree has more than met its match. In the lobby of the CMOC stands a glorious 30-foot cedar tree.

Around the evergreen mammoth stand a group of Iraqis, smiling and laughing. Chaplain Stutz, however, is utterly confused.

"That tree is bigger than any door in the building," said Stutz, eyes wide in perplexity. Every day, the farmers ask me, 'do you see it? Do you see it?' I'm like, yeah, I see it. And I don't know how you did it."

Need cash?

The 230th Finance Battalion
is on Steadfast and Loyal Street next to the bombed-out palace in Tikrit.
Hours of operation:
Mondays — Saturdays
9 a.m.— 5 p.m.
Sundays
10 a.m. — 2 p.m.

Check cashing limit is \$200 per week and the casual pay limit is \$350 per month. A DA Form 2142 (pay inquiry) signed by an E-7 or above is needed for casual pay.

21st Combat Support Hospital

serving you at two locations...
Sick call and dental clinic
hours of operation

Mosul
7 a.m. — 4 p.m.

Balad
8 — 10 a.m.

*Sick call ends Jan. 4.

Emergency rooms are open 24 hours daily.

Guardsmen set standard for fast medical response

By Master Sgt.

Sonja C.R. Whittington

Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – A bomb explodes in Baghdad. People are injured and need medical treatment quickly. But a security team is needed for the military medical emergency response team to travel outside the “Green Zone” in the city. How long can the injured wait while the two teams – security and the medical – scramble together?

A group of medics from the Colorado National Guard are developing a pilot program in coordinated military medical emergency response.

The Rapid Advance Medical Team, or RAM-T, concept was developed following the U.N. bombing in Baghdad last Aug. 17. Leaders noticed that the coordinated response by the medical and security communities weren’t optimized, said Maj. (Dr.) Mark H. Chandler who is a physician and officer in charge of the medical clinic at the former Presidential Palace in Baghdad where the reconstruction and security coalitions are headquartered.

“Based on (the response to the U.N. bombings), we realized we needed a faster, more coordinated response,” explained Chandler who has called Denver home for the past 10 years.

Chandler and the other seven medics working in the palace are members of the Colorado National Guard. They belong to C Company, 109th Area Support Medical Battalion headquartered in Iowa.

The Colorado National Guard sent a four-member team to Baghdad in April by way of Kuwait. In October, four more members of the Colorado National Guard arrived.

The small medical team is responsible for the treatment and care of up to 2,500 people assigned to the Coalition Provisional Authority and the Combined Joint Task Force 7, the civilian and military coalitions responsible for reconstruction and security of Iraq. The medical staff sees



Photo by Capt. Michael Adams

Colorado Guardsmen deployed to the clinic at the CPA/CJTF-7 headquarters care for a patient in the back of their new ambulance. The Guardsmen are responsible for developing a new concept in rapid emergency responses.

an average of 50 to 80 patients a day in their one-room clinic.

In addition to caring for the civilian, military and contractors at the headquarters, the medics provide emergency care for Iraqis.

But there seemed to be a ‘disconnect’ between the military and Iraqi civilian health care systems, Chandler said. That disconnect is what the RAM Team is all about.

“We scrounged and put together an emergency response team,” said Chandler. He contacted his civilian employer, Denver Health Medical Center, who donated materials including advanced airway equipment. And the University of Colorado donated laryngoscopes used to establish airways.

“We also received a new civilian ambulance that’s worth \$180,000,” said

Chandler.

As Chandler explained, a military field ambulance does not have as much sophisticated emergency equipment as a civilian ambulance. The goal for a field ambulance is to stabilize a patient long enough to remove him or her from the ‘front lines.’ Thanks to the extensive equipment on the civilian ambulance, more intensive treatment can also be administered during transport.

The real innovative concept for the RAM Team was to integrate a physician or physician’s assistant, such as Capt. Michael Adams from Norwood, into the response team along with proving their own security team.

When an incident occurs, the 30th Medical Brigade provides the logistical information to the team and within a few minutes, the RAM Team is ready to roll –

usually within 3-5 minutes.

“We’re generally in a higher state of readiness,” said Sgt. Sheldon Smith, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the evacuation. “We have a higher medical response profile because of the PAs (physician’s assistants) and doctors on the team.”

Coordination for these emergencies involves more than sending out an ambulance with the medical experts on board. Security teams are needed to protect the medics en route to an incident.

“We had problems coordinating security so we started to do our own,” said Smith who works as a deputy sheriff for San Miguel County when he’s not serving as a National Guardsman.

The medics split the duty for the response team with some providing security and others assisting with medical treatment. The other team members are Sgt. Kyle Kosman and Specialists Jeffrey Oldaker, Duane Ziegler and Antoine Brown, all from Montross, and Spc. Aaron Hall from Crested Butte.

The concept for the team was developed by Maj. John Kerstettler, a member of the Iowa National Guard, but “it has evolved because of the personnel here,” Smith said.

“Our missions have matured as the team became more proficient,” Chandler said.

The team’s mission became more than a concept when all the ideas came together to form their response to the Baghdad hotel bombing earlier this year. “By then we had our security team put together ... Everything went much the way it was supposed to,” said Smith who, along with his wife and three children call Montross home.

Since the team provides its own security, it’s important for them to know their response area.

“We know what’s safe, what’s not safe,” Smith explained. “And we know where all the hospitals in the area are – not just the military ones.”

AFN

Continued from Page 5

link between the commander and the troops on the front line, and that clearly extends beyond Baghdad.”

In addition to the growth in its coverage area, the station is also increasing its hours of on-air live programming tailored to soldiers in Iraq’s needs. Currently, live broadcasts from Iraq are from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

“We started out with six hours of live programming a day,” he said “but now that we’re going to more locations, we’re going to add another live show which will take us up to nine hours of live programming. We will add an early evening show probably in the 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. range.”

The coming expansion will lead to many benefits for soldiers. The station has received support from radio stations and listeners back in the United States in the

form of messages from radio personalities and troops’ family members. Also, during the other 15 hours of the day that are not live broadcasts, troops can hear news and music from the states through the AFRTS (American Forces Radio and Television Service) signal.

“It gives us a chance to boost the morale of more Coalition forces,” said Sgt. Sandra Mercado, also known as Niki Cage on the morning radio show, with the 222nd Broadcast Operations Detachment. “It gives the soldiers a little piece of home.”

The responses from soldiers in Baghdad have been nothing but positive, and Nouis is confident that encouraging feedback will be received from soldiers in every other area also.

The broadcasting areas do not yet include Ar Ramadi, where the 82nd Airborne is based. However, AFN plans to begin service there Feb. 1.

As for all other areas, stay tuned for more information.



Freedom Radio ~ AFN Iraq

Will be available on the following frequencies:

Baghdad	107.7 FM
Balad	107.3 FM
Kirkuk	107.3 FM
Mosul	105.1 FM
Qayyarah	93.3 FM
Sinjar	107.9 FM
Tallil AB	107.3 FM
Tikrit	93.3 FM

Cavalry takes to Baghdad's streets



Armor cavalry scouts from the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, Task Force 1st Armored Division, conduct a raid to detain a suspected bomb maker wanted for attacks against Coalition forces and the Iraqi people.

Story and photo by
Sgt. Brent M. Williams
49th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD— The metallic tread of the 1st Armored Division could be heard rumbling throughout the streets in the neighborhoods along Highway 8 south of the Baghdad International Airport.

Three M3A2 Bradley Cavalry Fighting Vehicles came to an abrupt stop, blocking a street from unnecessary traffic and separating an enemy from the rest of the world. The vehicles, lone and menacing at the ends of the street, lowered their ramps from the rear of their iron hulls, delivering the "Iron Soldiers" to their latest objective.

The Comanche Troop of 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment poured from the armored track vehicles, and converged on a house in south-central Baghdad to detain a person suspected of attacks against Coalition forces.

The squadron, part of the 1st Armored Division, is attached to the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

Working at lightning speed, the armored cavalry scouts hammered their way through the wrought-iron and glass door of the suspect's house, entered the structure and detained their target. Within minutes, the soldiers cleared and secured the site; their objectives complete. The scouts also confiscated a mortar sight and two AK-47 rifles.

Traditionally, a raid of this nature would be undertaken by Coalition Special Forces or infantrymen, said team leader Sgt. Chad Cochran.

"This is the part of the scout's duty," Cochran said.

"(The scouts) have been down the same road 100 times. We're taking each mission seriously, always keeping the threat in mind," he said.

Since assuming responsibility for military operations in Iraq's capitol city in June,

the armored cavalry scouts have served in versatile and non-traditional roles to help maintain a safe and secure environment for Coalition forces and the people of Baghdad.

The scouts conducted Military Operations in Urban Terrain, which is combat training in urban tactics, before assuming their current role in the streets of Baghdad, he said. The training helped prepare the soldiers for raids to find former regime loyalists, terrorists and criminals in Iraq.

"We're unique as a CAV squadron since we have all . . . (cavalry scouts)," said team leader Sgt. Robert Brunner. "These guys know what they're doing. It's a battle drill for them at this point."

The two units are pleased with their ability to work well together and the cohesion they've established.

"We're nothing but proud of the 82nd and their support of us," said Troop Commander Capt. Chase G. Metcalf. "Together, we're a combined combat-arms team that can't be beat by anybody."

Upon arriving in Baghdad in June, one of the missions for Troop Comanche was providing security for the "Blue Falcons," of the 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, Metcalf said.

"Our first role was as the outer cordon during search operations, serving as the (quick reaction force) for the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team," Metcalf said.

The soldiers considered the assignment to be a testament to their ability and professionalism and ultimately an honor, Metcalf said.

"These guys, they're in the right frame of mind, focused on the mission," said Staff Sgt. Robert Eplee, platoon sergeant.

A "close-knit bunch of guys," the soldiers of Troop Comanche are working to make Baghdad safe for the Coalition and the people of Iraq, he said.

Soldiers, Iraqis celebrate school reopening

By Spc. Ryan Smith

372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit from Utica, N.Y., celebrated the completion of renovations at a primary school in Baghdad with a Dec. 1 ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The 414th is part of the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade, part of Task Force 1st Armored Division.

The civil affairs soldiers initiated the repairs about a month ago at the Al Manama Primary School in the Abu Ghraib district of Baghdad where the unit operates, according to Spc. Maynard Anken, a civil affairs specialist with the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion.

Using funds set aside by the 1st Armored Division for reconstruction projects, the civil affairs unit hired contractors to repair the school, which they had found in a state of disrepair, Anken said.

"The soldiers helped to fix everything that was ruined or broken," said Fatat Farhan, principal of the school.

"It was in very bad condition."

The contractors repaired concrete outside the school, as well as repairing the classrooms, halls, bathrooms and plumbing. The interior and exterior of the school were also painted, Anken said.

The repair work was done while children were attending classes at the school, which has approximately 1,500 students.

"The work we've done is important because rebuilding Iraq empowers the local populace," said Sgt. Amy Fish, a civil affairs specialist with the 414th. "We're making our relationship with the local population a little stronger, and, hopefully, that will lead to less animosity."



Photo by Tech Sgt. John Houghton/ 1st Combat Camera Squadron

Sgt. Justin MacDougal (left) and Spc. Maynard Anken, civil affairs specialists with the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit from Utica, N.Y., sit in class with children at the recently renovated Al Manama Primary School in Baghdad.